

APPENDIX

XVII. APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Appendix must include a complete Table of Contents, which includes the page number or attachment number, attachment title, and relevant selection criterion. A sample table of contents form is included below. Each attachment in the Appendix must be described in the narrative text of the relevant selection criterion, with a rationale for how its inclusion supports the narrative and the location of the attachment in the Appendix.

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A-1.2	Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework	Section A 1 pg. 14
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Section A

**MINIMUM LICENSING
REQUIREMENTS
FOR
Child Care
Centers**



**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
CHILD CARE LICENSING UNIT
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PUB-002 (REV. 08/22/2013)

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Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook For Three & Four Year Old Children 2013

Framework:

A document containing the necessary components to shape and guide the design and development of quality early childhood education programs.



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES



Division of Child Care and
Early Childhood Education

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Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care

Elements of Quality Infant and Toddler Care

- Relationships
- Environment
- Health and Safety
- Experiences
- Diversity

Developmental Strands

- To learn about themselves - Self-concept Development
- To learn about their feelings - Emotional Development
- To learn about other people - Social Development
- To learn to communicate - Language Development
- To learn to move and do - Physical Development
- To learn to think - Cognitive Development

Benchmarks with Strategies and Activities for Infants and Toddlers

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Mission Statement

Elements of Quality Infant and Toddler Programs

Element I Relationships

Elements II Environment

Element III Health and Safety

Element IV Experiences

Element V Diversity

Developmental Strands

Strand I To learn about themselves - Self-Concept Development

Strand II To learn about their feelings - Emotional Development

Strand III To learn about other people - Social Development

Strand IV To learn to communicate - Language Development

Strand V To learn to move and do - Physical Development

Strand VI To learn to think - Cognitive Development

Appendix A: Assessment

Appendix B: Professional Development and Training

Glossary of Terms

References

Health Systems Change in Arkansas

Arkansas Payment Improvement Initiative

Arkansas is currently pursuing a broad transformation effort to improve the health care system in Arkansas. In the face of rising health care costs and a slow growing economy, Arkansas has embarked on a broad health systems transformation initiative to support the health and well-being of all Arkansans, especially those with low household incomes and serious health conditions. The Arkansas Payment Improvement Initiative (APII) was launched to establish a comprehensive approach to achieve the “Triple Aim” of improving health, increasing quality and lowering the growth of health care costs. The model integrates population-based and episode-based care delivery strategies to coordinate care across a team of providers, incentivize quality and cost-effectiveness, and improve outcomes. These strategies are supported by five core enabling initiatives: results-based payment and reporting, health care workforce development, consumer engagement and personal responsibility, health information technology adoption, and expanded coverage for health care services.

APII system changes will encompass the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), Episodes of Care, and Health Homes. The goals of the PCMH and episode-based care are the same: reward high-quality, coordinated and efficient care. The aim of Health Homes is to provide extra support for people who need an increased level of care coordination or face greater challenges in navigating the health care system, with three primary populations for change that include people with developmental disabilities, mental health issues and those living in long-term care facilities. Patient-Centered Medical Homes or Health Homes are not physical buildings, but rather a process of utilizing a care team that takes responsibility for the overall health of a patient.ⁱ

Behavioral Health Systems

System of Care

The Arkansas Department of Human Services launched a cross-divisional, System of Care (SOC) transformation effort in 2007, in an effort to support transitions out of residential treatment centers (RTC) and to maintain children in the community, led by the Arkansas Children’s Behavioral Health Care Commission. The planning process for the Arkansas SOC is focused on an improved system of behavioral health care, integrating all child serving agencies, and serving all children and youth who meet the identified target population. The defined target population will include children and youth identified with: Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), receiving psychiatric services in a residential setting or at-risk of being placed in a residential setting, multisystem involved, and/or multiple acute hospitalizations. The AR SOC incorporates a broad array of services and supports that are organized into a coordinated network, integrates care planning and management across multiple levels, is culturally and linguistically competent, and builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth at service delivery and policy levels.

Recently, the State of Arkansas received a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded grant, Expansion of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and their Families, to plan the implementation, expansion, and sustainability of a

statewide SOC. This one year project will take a multi-faceted approach to planning for implementation of a statewide SOC which will provide for expansion of family-driven, youth-guided, and culturally competent supports and services by emphasizing training and certification for service providers, outcome measurement to ensure efficacy, and infrastructure for financial sustainability.

Behavioral Health Home and 1915(i)

The existing Arkansas behavioral health (BH) system faces many challenges including gaps in services for mental health and substance abuse, early intervention, provider focus on recovery and resilience, inconsistent screening and assessment, and limited tracking of outcomes. To resolve these challenges, the DHS vision is to implement a comprehensive, patient-centered delivery system supporting the development of Behavioral Health Homes (BHH) and to provide services through the 1915(i) Medicaid funding mechanism. DHS aims to deliver integrated care management in a manner that facilitates quality care and positive outcomes through managing core care delivery by ensuring effective treatment of BH conditions, providing care coordination within and across BH, medical health, developmental disabilities, long-term supports, and other systems. Additionally, Arkansas DHS is finalizing a 1915(i) Medicaid State Plan Amendment. This funding mechanism will allow DHS to meet an intended goal of enhancing client utilization of evidence-based home and community based services as an alternative to inpatient treatment by securing federal funds to support reimbursement of needed services, targeting benefits to a specific population whereby services can differ in amount, duration, and scope across three “tiers”.

The new BHH system will be conscious of varying severity of needs as well as intensity of care management required for different individuals. As such, individuals will receive treatment services and care management within appropriate “tiers.” Tier 1 is for clients with low-needs where the patient centered medical home (PCMH) is responsible for care management. Tier 2 is for medium-needs where the BHH is required to manage BH services. Tier 3 is for high-needs where the BHH intensely manages BH and support services. The 1915(i) requires an independent assessment of clients and an individualized care plan be developed based on the assessment process. The independent care plan will be person-centered, identify necessary home and community-based services, prevent inappropriate care, provide independent assessment and annual reevaluation and care plan development.

Community First Choice Option and Balancing Incentive Program

The Community First Choice Option (CFCO) and Balancing Incentive Program (BIP) complement the payment improvement initiative. The primary goal of these two options is to align the level of need with the most appropriate level of services in the least restrictive care setting. The CFCO also provides additional resources and a mechanism to eliminate the Alternative Community Services (ACS) waiting list of over 2000 people with developmental disabilities and offers long-awaited services to those who need them. The Balancing Incentive Program (BIP) will provide support for the No Wrong Door/Single Entry Point for clients to have ease in accessing appropriate services and programs.

Child Welfare Systems

The Division of Child and Family Services is focused on transforming the child welfare system by targeting children of all ages to provide supports and services that safely reduce the number of children entering foster care, increase placement stability, and expedite permanency for children in foster care. Through the use of multiple state partners, DCFS is instituting or expanding several programs to address these child welfare goals. Some programs or activities include: Use of a differential response, recruitment of foster homes, Project Play, Nurturing Parent, among others.

Arkansas is working to effectively leverage these tools in order to build a robust, sustainable system that supports a home and community-based care model in the State. The impact of these tools is yet to be seen, but Arkansas anticipates significant improvements in the health care system in the state that provides individuals with a full continuum of treatment options and supportive services.

Arkansas' Key Content Areas and Core Competencies

for Early Care and Education Professionals

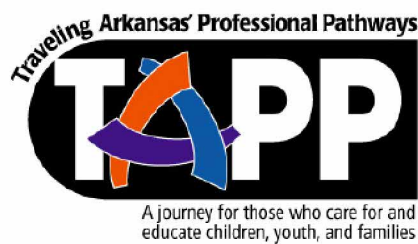


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ASU Childhood Services

Selected Trainings

Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) BB levels 1, 2, 3 + ABC Administrators/Staff

ASQ-3 and ASQ-Social/Emotional are screening tools to help identify children who are at risk for developmental delays or social/emotional difficulties. ACQUIRE provides training and implementation support to child care facilities in using the ASQ.

Al's Caring Pals BB levels 2 and 3 Family Child Care

Al's Caring Pals is a comprehensive curriculum and teacher training program that develops children's social-emotional competence, self-control, and problem solving abilities.

AR Fit Kids BB levels 1-3 + ABC Administrators/Staff

Developed as part of a grant from WIC, this 3-hour training emphasizes the importance of daily physical activity and good nutrition for children and encourages family involvement. Participants receive a set of activity cards containing 72 experiences they can plan for children.

Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate/Credential (ACPAC/C)

BB levels 1, 2, 33 + ABC Administrators

The 60 clock hour Certificate is earned by attending three two-day seminars and completing three individual projects and nine hours of electives. The Credential allows a more in-depth study of management topics and includes 60 clock hours of electives (from more than 100 available) and a culminating project. Examples of Credential modules: Building Partnerships with Families; Child Care Transportation Risk Management;

Delegation; Staff Retention; Money Matters; Performance Appraisal; Strengths-Based Coaching; and Team Building.

Arkansas Children's Week (ACW) BB levels 1, 2, 3 + ABC Administrators/Staff

Every April, ACW focuses attention on the achievements and needs of Arkansas children, families, and early childhood professionals. ASU Childhood Services develops a 72-page resource book for staff and materials for families, and conducts more than 20 workshops throughout the state during March.

Arkansas Pre-Employment Training New Employees

This online course is a total of eight clock hours, presented in four two-hour modules. Topics include health, safety, nutrition, child development, and behavior guidance. The focus is on minimum licensing requirements.

BAS Basics BB level 1 Family Child Care Primary Caregiver

This 3.5 clock hour workshop provides an overview of the Better Beginnings certification process and the *Business Administration Scale*. BAS Basics is offered in face-to-face workshops and online.

Basics of Assessment Teaching Staff and Administrators

A component of the Continuum for Effective Teaching

Based on the NAEYC *Classroom Based Assessment* curriculum, this 12 clock hour course lays

the foundation for using any curriculum embedded assessment. Participants practice observing children, documenting learning, interpreting documentation, and using assessment results for curriculum planning.

CHS DIRECT

BB levels 1-3 + ABC

Administrators/Staff

Childhood Services DIRECT is a series of online three-hour trainings consisting of targeted topics that support individual professional development goals. Five topics are offered each semester, with at least one topic designed for infant/toddler staff and one for administrators. Recent topics include “Developmentally Appropriate Physical Activities,” “Staff Retention,” and “Choosing Toys and Materials for Infants and Toddlers.”

Conscious Discipline

Teaching Staff and Administrators

Conscious Discipline consists of 36 clock hours of training, provided in three two-day seminars. Participants learn about brain development, interactions, and social-emotional development as they practice strategies for helping children learn self-regulation. Conscious Discipline was developed by Dr. Becky Bailey.

Curriculum Approaches

Administrators and Teaching Staff

Training and coaching are offered on five curriculum approaches: Adventures in Learning (developed in Arkansas); the Creative Curriculum for Preschool; the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos; the Project Approach; and HighScope for Preschool.

Curriculum Forum

Administrators and Teaching Staff

In this forum, participants are introduced to five curriculum approaches, with opportunities to explore each curriculum in order to select a curriculum that is a good match for their program.

Developmentally Appropriate Physical Activities

BB Level 1

Administrators and Teaching Staff

Three workshops are available (two clock hours each): Essentials of Developmentally Appropriate Physical Activities; Developmentally Appropriate Physical Experiences for Infants and Toddlers; and Developmentally Appropriate Physical Activities—Books and Movement.

Digging into the PAS

BB Levels 1-3 + ABC Administrators

Administrators who have completed PAS Basics training are eligible to attend this six-hour Session to dig deeper into the *Program Administration Scale*. Additional workshops (2-3 clock hours each) are offered on items in the PAS, such as Using Technology and Risk Management.

New Director's Orientation (DO)

BB Levels 1-3 + ABC

New Administrators

Required of center directors during the first six months of employment. The 18 clock hours of training help new directors learn about *Minimum Licensing Requirements*, find resources they need, and develop a network of peers. Training content and materials are continually updated based on feedback from the DCCECE Licensing Unit.

Dollars and Sense

BB Levels 1-3 + ABC Administrators

This seven-hour training teaches basic financial principles and organization to administrators of

programs for children. The training is offered in both face-to-face and online formats. Administrators learn to accurately interpret their financial condition in order to make sound decisions to ensure continuity and quality of their programs.

Early Care and Education DIRECT

BB Levels 1

Staff New to ECE

A component of the Continuum for Effective Teaching

This 20-hour orientation to child care is offered in five online modules: child development, the learning environment, language and positive guidance, planning activities for children, and professionalism. ECE DIRECT is also suitable as a refresher of basic child development principles and current best practices. When requested, this course can be provided in face-to-face workshops.

Emergency Preparedness

Getting Ready status

Administrators

Based on NACCRRA disaster preparation materials, this training helps administrators establish effective emergency procedures. Resources are provided to help facilities revise existing procedures and develop new procedures for the types of disasters that are most likely to occur in their area.

ERS New Teacher Training

New ABC Staff

This 6-hour training provides new ABC teaching staff with an overview of the ECERS-R for preschool staff, ITERS-R for infant-toddler staff or FCCERS-R for family child care providers. The training is designed to acquaint new teaching staff with the environment rating scales and the assessment/improvement process.

ERS Refresher

Returning ABC Staff

Returning ABC teaching staff attends this annual 3-hour training on the ECERS-R, ITTERS-R or FCCERS-R. The refresher training is designed to extend the teachers' knowledge of the environment rating scales and to inform them of any modifications to the ABC environmental assessment process.

ERS – The Basics

BB Level 1

Administrators/Staff

ERS–The Basics is a 3-hour workshop designed to introduce child care providers to the environment rating scales used to assess program quality in Better Beginnings facilities. ERS–The Basics helps providers use the ERS to complete the self-assessment required at BB Level 1.

Essentials of Mentoring and Coaching

BB Level 3 + ABC

Supervisors/Coaches

This blended course provides 24 clock hours of professional development through a combination of seminars and online modules. Topics include building the professional relationship, adult development, effective communication, and the coaching process. The course is appropriate for directors, supervisors, lead teachers, trainers, mentors, and coaches.

Family Child Care Business Management

Getting Ready

New Family Child Care

This project works with individual potential providers to help them determine the type of child care business they want to pursue, and reviews resources available to support them. ACQUIRE partners with CHILDREN of North Central Arkansas to provide business training, materials, and supplies for new licensed family child care providers.

Framework Basics—Infant and Toddler

BB Level 2

I/T Teaching Staff

The 90-minute Webinar provides an orientation to the *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care*, and was created to meet Better Beginnings requirement 2.B.5. Webinars are

scheduled at different times of day to accommodate the diverse needs of participants.

Framework Basics—Preschool

BB Level 2

Preschool Teaching Staff

Designed to meet Better Beginnings Requirement 2.B.5, this 90-minute session introduces preschool teaching staff to the *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook*. Offered online every month. A trainer's guide for face-to-face delivery is available upon request from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and from ASU Childhood Services.

Hands-On Routine Care

Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff

A Component of the Continuum for Effective Teaching

This online course is a set of 10 one-hour modules, each focusing on practical skills needed for responsive caregiving. On-site coaching visits are scheduled after a participant completes five modules.

Intentional Teaching

I/T and Preschool Teaching Staff

A component of the Continuum for Effective Teaching

A series of nine workshops (face-to-face and online), Intentional Teaching guides intermediate level teachers into more purposeful and effective teaching practices, based on the book *Intentional Teaching*. On-site coaching visits follow the workshops.

Leadership Credential

BB Level 3 + ABC

Administrators/Supervisors, Lead Teachers, Trainers

The Leadership Credential expands the Mentor Endorsement Essentials of Leadership course, providing advanced professional development for emerging leaders. The 60 clock hour curriculum includes seminars, online assignments, and independent projects. Topics include dimensions of leadership, the historical perspective of early education, effective communication, and ethical leadership.

Making Every Day Count

BB level 1 + ABC

Teaching Staff

Participants learn to make every day count for children by increasing their skill in creating developmentally appropriate daily activity plans. Workshops are scheduled each month for three months. Weekly coaching visits following the workshops support application of workshop concepts in the participant's classroom. Designed for teachers with limited previous training.

Making First Experiences Count

BB Level 1-3 + ABC

Administrator/Staff /Parents

First relationships and first experiences in a child's life have a long-lasting and dramatic impact on brain growth and development. In six clock hours of training, participants explore how the brain develops and how they can provide essential experiences to support optimal development.

Making Your Workshops Active and Engaging

TAPP Trainers

This three clock hour course is offered online for less experienced trainers who want to learn more about meeting the needs of adult learners, types of workshop activities, and managing the logistics of training.

NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care)

BB Level1

Administrators

This program is designed to help prevent childhood obesity. Administrators use project materials to identify strengths and challenges to healthy eating and physical activity in child care settings.

PAS Basics

Getting Ready, BB Level 1

Administrators

This four clock hour workshop provides an overview of the Better Beginnings certification process and the Program *Administration Scale*. PAS Basics is offered in face-to-face workshops throughout the year and is available online every month.

Powerful Interactions

Teaching Staff and Administrators

A component of the Continuum for Effective Teaching

Based on the NAEYC book *Powerful Interactions*, these workshops (four clock hours or six clock hours) introduce a 3-step process to help teachers connect with children to extend learning. Participants learn about the importance of teacher-child interactions and how they can make their everyday interactions more effective.

Presenting and Facilitating Workshops

TAPP Trainers

Experienced trainers may enroll in this three clock hour online course. Topics include presentation techniques, facilitation strategies, and dealing with difficult behavior from workshop participants.

TAPP Trainer Orientation 1

New TAPP Trainers

This three clock hour session introduces trainers to the TAPP Registry procedures for Registering new trainings and reporting attendance and to the responsibilities of TAPP

Trainers.

Wrapping Up Quality: Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care

BB Level 2

Infant/Toddler Teaching Staff

This 20 clock hour course introduces participants to the *Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care*. Using an adapted case study approach and then assists them in applying the knowledge of the Framework to planning activities for infants and toddlers. An adapted case study approach allows some individualization of course content.

Work Sampling System Administrator

ABC Administrators

This session overviews the administrative interface of the online Work Sampling System assessment tool. The training is offered in both face-to-face and online formats.

Work Sampling System Curriculum Connections

ABC Teaching Staff

WSS Curriculum Connections (6 hours) focuses on the connection between the WSS assessment and curriculum, and strategies for using assessment information in program improvement. The workshop includes in-depth training on the WSS individualized and group planning tools.

Work Sampling System Introduction

ABC Preschool Teaching Staff

This two-day training (12 clock hours) is an introduction to the Work Sampling System (WSS), an instructional performance-based and curriculum- neutral assessment system. The training helps teachers use WSS to document and assess children's skills, knowledge, behavior and

accomplishments across a variety of curriculum areas on multiple occasions in order to enhance teaching and learning.

Work Sampling System/Ounce Mentoring

ABC Administrators/Teaching Staff

A mentor makes an initial site visit to all ABC locations to assist with yearly account updates and rollover. All new ABC teachers work with a mentor for two years, including site visits and support via phone, email, and online assessment data checks. The mentoring service is available veteran staff upon request.

Work Sampling System Online Portfolio

BB Level 3

ABC Preschool Teaching Staff

In this six-hour workshop ABC staff are introduced to the Work Sampling online portfolio component, a structured and systematic approach to the online storage collection of digital samples of children's work that represents development over time and across the curriculum.

Work Sampling System Refresher

ABC Veteran Teaching Staff

This six-hour training is for veteran ABC staff focusing on updated Work Sampling System information, reviewing and networking regarding the assessment tool.

Web-based Professional Development Opportunities

Selected ACPAC Credential modules

AOSN Webinars

Arkansas Youth Development Institute

Dollars and Sense

BAS Basics

CHS DIRECT courses

Developmental Assets

Early Care and Education DIRECT

Essentials of Mentoring and Coaching

Framework Basics—Infant and Toddler

Framework Basics—Preschool

Selected Leadership Credential modules

PAS Basics

School Age Nutrition Training

School Age Physical Activities Training

Specialist Certificate—School Age



Professional Development Opportunities for Infant/Toddler Practitioners

Ages and Stages Questionnaires

Arkansas Children's Week

CHS DIRECT

Curriculum Approaches

Early Care and Education DIRECT

ERS—The Basics



Framework Basics—Infant and Toddler

Making Every Day Count

Making 1st Experiences Count

Infant/Toddler Extravaganza

Ounce Mentoring

Ounce Technical Assistance

Wrapping Up Quality:

Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care

Professional Development Opportunities for School Age Practitioners

Arkansas Youth Development Institute and

Youth Worker Orientation Certificate

AOSN Webinars and TA Calls

AOSN Youth Policy Summit

Best Practices Academies

Developmental Assets

YPQA External Assessor Refresher Training

School Age Credential

School Age Essentials

School Age Nutrition Training

School Age Physical Activities Training

Specialist Certificate—School Age

Statewide School Age Conference

YPQA Assessment

YPQA: Introduction

YPQA: Basics

YPQA Planning with Data

YPQA Youth Methods



Language and Literacy Development

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS	HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK	COMMON CORE for ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	WHAT IS THE SAME AND DIFFERENT ABOUT THESE STANDARDS?
THREE-YEAR-OLD STANDARD	DOMAIN ELEMENT FOR 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS	END OF PRE-KINDERGARTEN EXPECTATIONS	
Listening and Understanding Entering into Conversations	Receptive Language: The ability to comprehend and understand language	Standards for Speaking and Listening: Cluster: Comprehension and collaboration Standards for Reading Informational Text: Cluster: Range of reading and level of text complexity Standards for Language: Clusters: - Conventions of Standard English - Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Language and early literacy skills are critical aspects of early childhood development and learning. Language, for example, is key to development across most domains, and early language skills are predictive of later success in reading and writing. Language development typically involves aspects of receptive language skills (the ability to understand) and expressive language skills (the ability to be understood). Children's receptive and expressive oral language skills form the foundations necessary for understanding and communicating using written language (i.e., reading and writing). Early literacy skills are also crucial pillars in supporting later reading and writing skills. Research suggests that the early literacy skills that are most predictive of later literacy achievement are alphabet knowledge (knowledge of letters and their corresponding sounds), phonological awareness (the ability to perceive and manipulate the sounds of spoken language), print concepts (understanding of the form and function of print), early writing (familiarity with writing implements, conventions, and skills), and book knowledge and appreciation (interest in reading, the process of how books are read, and comprehension of content). (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show understanding and respond to simple directions and requests Demonstrate active listening skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends to language during conversations, songs, stories, or other learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm understanding of text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details with modeling and support 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand abstract concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehends increasingly complex and varied vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With modeling and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meaning¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With modeling and support, sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent With modeling and support, demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note objects in classroom that are small) Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words and phrases based on pre-kindergarten reading and content. 	

¹When examining the Common Core Standards in this alignment, Common Core standards are indicated with a bullet (•) and the standards' corresponding sub-standards are indicated with a plus (+).

Continued on page 9

Commissioners

Name	Represents
(b)(6)	Education Professional
	Department of Education
	Hamburg Public School District
	Head Start
	Business
	Department of Career Education
	Business
	NLR Public School District
	HIPPY
	House Committee Children & Youth
	Senate Committee on Education
	Provider
	Family Child Care Provider
	Provider
	Parent
	House Committee on Education
	Head Start Collaboration
	Migrant & Seasonal Head Start
	Early Head Start
	Academy of Pediatrics
	Academy of Family Physicians
	Department of Health
	Social/Emotional Clinical Provider
	Senate Committee on Children & Youth

Section B

Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System



Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

Licensing and Accreditation Unit
Better Beginnings
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-150
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
(501) 682-8590

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ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – FAMILY CHILD CARE REQUIREMENTS

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Human Services.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 <i>Registered facilities must meet licensing ratios</i>	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 Level 2 <i>Facility must be licensed</i>
Administration	1.A.1 Primary caregiver attends "BAS Basics" training.	2.A.1 A program review is completed by a certified BAS assessor. 2.A.2 Primary caregiver reviews Strengthening Families website, webinar, or receives training in the strengthening families initiative.	3.A.1 Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on BAS items 2-10 (item 2 is scored, but not included in average). 3.A.2 Primary caregiver completes Strengthening Families online self-assessment for 3 or more strategies. 3.A.3 Primary caregiver develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least 1 action step.
Provider/ Staff Qualifications/ Professional Development	<u>Qualifications</u> 1.B.1 Primary and secondary caregivers are members of the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry. 1.B.2 Primary caregiver meets requirements for TAPP Foundation 2 or higher. <u>Professional Development</u> 1.B.3 Primary caregiver completes an ERS training. 1.B.4 Primary caregiver completes training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.	<u>Qualifications</u> 2.B.1 All caregivers maintain membership in the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry. 2.B.2 Primary caregiver meets requirements for TAPP Foundation 3 or higher. 2.B.3 Within the first year of employment at least 50% of secondary caregivers meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher. <u>Professional Development</u> 2.B.4 Primary caregiver participates annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development. 2.B.5 Primary caregiver completes "Framework Basics" training. 2.B.6 Primary caregiver participates annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on nutrition for children.	<u>Qualifications</u> 3.B.1 Primary caregiver meets requirements for TAPP Foundation 3 or higher and has an additional 15 clock hours. 3.B.2 Within the first year of employment all secondary caregivers meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of secondary caregivers are at TAPP Foundation 2 or higher. <u>Professional Development</u> 3.B.3 Primary caregiver participates annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development.

SITUATION: DHS is introducing Better Beginnings to the public.

HOME BASE MESSAGE

QUESTION: Why should I care about Better Beginnings?

Children deserve the very best care and education possible **as early as possible**. Better Beginnings connects Arkansas families with information and care that helps their children experience a safe, happy, healthy childhood.

Providers <small>State • Administrators</small>	Families, Parents, Grandparents, Public, Media	Field Staff: <small>Trainers, Coordinators, Teachers, Program Development, Coordinators, METS and — Learning, Program Support, Special Services, etc.</small>	Employers, Community Stakeholders	Elected Officials	DHS/Internal
Help providers understand the value and benefits of Better Beginnings	Help families, parents, the media and the public understand the benefits and value of Better Beginnings	As front line communicators we need field staff to understand how Better Beginnings complements their job and helps providers be more compliant with state regulations	We want to help community stakeholders understand the benefits of Better Beginnings and know how it affects their workforce and their community	Ensure that elected officials and legislators have been communicated with regarding Better Beginnings	Ensure that DHS employees, particularly those who may be answering external inquiries, understand the benefits of Better Beginnings and can direct inquiries to the correct place
PROOF POINTS Tools and Training—We will give you the tools, guidance and training that you need to participate in Better Beginnings. Step-by-step information and guidance to get you started are on the website. Grant money is available. Grant money is available when you achieve certain levels. It is also available for every year you maintain level 1, 2 or 3 status. Voluntary—it's your choice to pursue a quality rating. Don't be afraid of the PAS. As you work with it, one step at a time you will find that it will strengthen your management practices and make your job easier. Current status doesn't really matter. We have tools for every level to help you get to the rating level you want. Better Beginnings requirements are naturally complimentary with your desire to create happy, healthy, safe environments for your children. Validation—When you display Better Beginnings materials, parents can recognize your status as a quality program. Visit ARBetterBeginnings.com for resources.	PROOF POINTS Insist on quality—For your child's sake, you have to look beyond cost and convenience and know what to look for when assessing your child care choices. Those early months and years following birth really do matter. Maximum brain development occurs during the first 5 years. Children need opportunities for quality learning as early as possible.* Make your job easier—Better Beginnings ratings mean fewer infractions, better staff retention and more satisfied staff and families. Encourage participation in Better Beginnings with programs that are not quality rated. Their compliance will make your job easier. Current status doesn't really matter. We have tools for every level to help you reach the rating level you want. Lots of help is available. Better Beginnings offers a variety of support, training and technical assistance to help providers. Visit ARBetterBeginnings.com for answers to many provider questions. Questions? Call the Better Beginnings help line at 1-800-445-3316.	PROOF POINTS Those early months and years following birth really do matter. Maximum brain development occurs during the first 5 years. Children need opportunities for quality learning as early as possible.* Make your job easier—Better Beginnings ratings mean fewer infractions, better staff retention and more satisfied staff and families. Encourage participation in Better Beginnings with programs that are not quality rated. Their compliance will make your job easier. Current status doesn't really matter. We have tools for every level to help you reach the rating level you want. Lots of help is available. Better Beginnings offers a variety of support, training and technical assistance to help providers. Visit ARBetterBeginnings.com for answers to many provider questions. Questions? Call the Better Beginnings help line at 1-800-445-3316.	PROOF POINTS Access to quality child care for your workforce is a human resources issue. Achievement gaps begin before kindergarten.* Children need quality learning experiences long before age 5. Tax Credit—parents are eligible for a refundable state tax credit for 2- and 3-star facilities Workforce quality—Productivity and absenteeism improve dramatically when parents choose high quality child care.* You can help employees make better choices by learning more about Better Beginnings and then communicating that information to your employees. Economic development is affected by lack of quality child care. Investing in early childhood development is a fiscally responsible way to reduce costs and create economic growth. Visit ARBetterBeginnings.com for resources.	PROOF POINTS More taxpayer money is required to remediate. Investing in early learning can increase academic achievement and result in savings on remedial education, grade retention, and special education services.* Achievement gaps begin before kindergarten.* Children need to have quality care and learning experiences long before age 5. Access to quality child care for the workforce is a human resources and economic development issue. Workforce quality—Productivity and absenteeism improve dramatically when parents choose high quality care. Arkansas is on the leading edge of the national trend toward child care quality improvement. Your ongoing support and leadership for Better Beginnings is important and appreciated.	PROOF POINTS Fewer licensing infractions—Quality improvement initiatives like Better Beginnings reduce the incidence of child care licensing infractions. Birth to 5 yrs old—Maximum brain development is happening during the first 5 years.* Better Beginnings supports quality learning opportunities as early as possible. Connections with caregivers in the early months and years influence a child's social-emotional development. Children need to be in the highest quality care possible.* Training—Providers have been given multiple opportunities to receive training on the new rating system. Education and support for providers is ongoing. We are sharing Better Beginnings information with consumers, legislators and employers. You will see broadcast messages helping the public understand the importance and value of Better Beginnings. ARBetterBeginnings.com is the best place to start. We have built a website full of resources for parents, caregivers, providers and the public. New content is added frequently. Questions? Call the Better Beginnings help line at 1-800-445-3316.
Components Training sessions • Webinars • Customizable print ads—for provider use • Counter cards • Window decals • Online provider content • Allotments • Allotment Letters • Recognition awards • Special events • Progress report • Website	Components New website content • New broadcast materials • Focus group testing • Collateral materials • Media schedule • News releases and feature stories • Special events *Research on website	Components Training • New website content • News release • Informal focus groups *Research on website	Components Direct mail • Letters • Brochure • In-person meetings • News release • Allotment • Special events • Speaking engagements • New website content *Research on website	Components Letter • Progress report • Brochure • Face-to-face as requested • New website content *Research on website	Components Meetings • Phone scripts for provider and public questions • New website content • Progress report *Research on website

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PAS/BAS Validity

Program Administration Scale (PAS) (Talan& Bloom, 2004). PAS is designed to measure the overall quality of administrative practices in center-based early care and education programs. It measures 25 items clustered in 10 subscales that measure leadership and management functions on a 7-point scale. Content validity was established by a panel of ten early childhood experts and informally by other administrators, consultants, and trainers. “A reliability and validity study of the PAS was conducted in 2003 involving 67 center-based early childhood programs. Data generated from the reliability and validity study were used to make revisions in the wording of different indicators, delete redundant items, and streamline the data-collection protocol” (p. 69). Among eight assessors, overall inter-rater reliability was 90%. Coefficient alpha for the Total PAS was .85. Pearson’s r correlational analysis showed subscaleintercorrelations with a median value of .33, confirming that the subscales for the most part, measure distinct characteristics of organizational administration. Concurrent validity was determined by a correlational analysis with two other instruments that measure early childhood organizational effectiveness.

Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS) (Talan& Bloom, 2009).

BAS is designed to complement FCCERS-R by measuring the quality of business practices in family child care programs. It includes 35 indicator strands clustered in 10 items using a 7-point scale. Content validity was established by a panel of seven early childhood experts. The sample for the reliability and validity study was drawn from 83 family child care providers in four states selected for variation in stringency of licensing regulations. Among 21 assessors average interrater reliability was 94%. “Coefficient alpha for the total 10-item scale (n=65) was calculated at .77, and for the 9-item scale (n=83) at .73, indicating that the BAS has acceptable internal consistency among items and that the items reliably measure the construct” (p. 39). Results of Pearsons’ r correlational analysis between items showed coefficients “ranged from .01 to .44,confirming that individual items on the BAS measure distinct yet somewhat related characteristics of family child care business practices” (p. 40). Correlational analysis confirmed that BAS is related to but not redundant of FCCERS-R.

Section C



Traveling Arkansas Professional Pathways

Entry

INTERMEDIATE 1
CDA or
135 Clock Hours
or
9 Sem. Hours

INTERMEDIATE 2
Accredited Higher
Education
18 Sem. Hours

INTERMEDIATE 3
Associate Degree
25 Sem. Hours

ADVANCED 2
Master
or
Doctorate
30 Sem. Hours

ADVANCED 1
Bachelor's Degree
30 Sem. Hours

**Intermediate
Byway**

**Advanced
Byway**

What is the destination of
your professional journey?

In which specialty area do
you wish to concentrate
your professional
development?

- Infant/Toddler
- Pre-School
- School-Age/Youth
- Family Child Care Home
- Administrator/Director
- Trainer/Coach
- Home Visitor
- Family Service

FOUNDATION 2
Registered
30 Clock hours

FOUNDATION 3
Registered
45 Clock hours
or
3 Sem. hours

FOUNDATION 1
Registered
15 Clock hours
incl. Orientation

**Foundation
Byway**

Learning²C methodology of the KSRC process improvement consultants has been designed to facilitate teams, enabling them to map their own work processes, analyze the processes for value-added vs. non-value-added work, identify the undesirable effects of their processes, and to design and implement their own process improvements.

All of these capacity building efforts have provided DCCECE with the ability to continue the growth and development of the professional development system for Arkansas early care and education professionals. Therefore, it is essential for a committed leadership within DHS/DCCECE to spearhead all future efforts and to determine any need for additional outside facilitation, consultation, or technical assistance so that the efforts will be supported and the momentum maintained for organizational learning and continuous quality improvement.

4.2 Recommendations

In our discussion of next steps above, there were a number of items identified as areas needing improvement. Below, we provide more specifics with regard to a number of these improvement efforts.

4.2.1 Registries

As mentioned above, the full potential of the registries cannot be achieved without some modifications to the data structure and the implementation of quality control measures to ensure the integrity of the data that is maintained within the registries. Specifically, we recommend, at a minimum, that these improvements be made:

- The policies and procedures of the Registry administrative office should ensure that the titles and/or acronyms of training programs as recorded in either the Training Registry or on a practitioner transcript correspond **exactly** to what they are within the SPECTRUM. Also, for the training programs that have similar names—such as the Arkansas Children’s Program Administrator Orientation, Certificate, and Credential—we recommend that a better way of distinguishing among them be used. For example, ACPA-I; ACPA-II, and ACPA-III would be used, which would indicate the sequential nature of these training programs.

Also, it appeared that practitioners were taking a number of similar training courses/workshops (e.g., ECERS training), which are not part of the SPECTRUM training programs. The state may want to think about how to incorporate into the SPECTRUM any of the training that is required for QA, ABC, and/or HIPPY practitioners

- The policies and procedures of the Registry administrative office should include a standardized way of registering multi-session training across all training organizations/trainers, so that there is no confusion regarding whether a training event/module listed on the Training Registry is, or is not, part of a SPECTRUM training program. Specifically, we recommend this way to title individual training events/modules: use the name of training program (e.g., Pre-K ELLA), along with the specific module name that is part of the training program (e.g., Overview of Pre-K Literacy Ages 3 and 4). In addition to this, the specific number of training hours for that module, as specified in SPECTRUM material (e.g., 2 hours, for the Overview Module) needs to be consistently recorded. Therefore, if a specific module is to be 4 hours, then 3.5 hours should not be recorded on a practitioner's transcript.⁸ To ensure that this standardized way of entering titles happens, the database should have drop-down menus with these titles. By using drop-down menus in data entry screens (wherever possible, not just on the titles of training), rather than allow typed-in entries, a lot of the quality issues with respect to the data maintained in the records will be eliminated.
- Once the standardized way of titling events/modules is established, the way in which these separate training events are listed on the Training Registry should reflect the sequential nature of the events and that they are all part of a more comprehensive training program. Hence, for the 60 hours for the Early Care and

⁸ If some of these anomalies occur because participants do not stay for the entire training or trainers do not provide the standard hours of training, then ACEPDS should have policies in place that discourage either of these from happening or have policies in place that allow some leeway regarding this, while still allowing the participant to earn the full hours for a training.

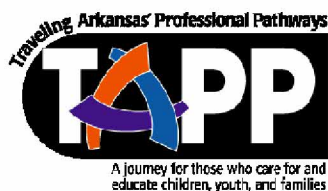
Education Specialist Certificate, a practitioner should be able to search the Training Registry using that title, to find out which of the modules that comprise that certificate are scheduled over the year (or half year, if that is the pattern for scheduling training events), along with when and where they are being offered. Having this capability will enable practitioners and their ECE programs do better professional development planning.

- The actual transcript record should include additional information, some of which is already included in the Practitioner Registry data base (e.g., degrees earned and major), and some of which is not included (e.g., the CDA and Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate). Furthermore, once a practitioner successfully completes a training program, then this needs to be recorded and printed out on their transcript. By having this data consistently entered into practitioner records, it can provide opportunities for the state to create and run routine reports that give a clearer picture of the ECE workforce with respect to their degrees, certificates, credentials, and endorsements earned. As it exists now, individual training organizations may have their own internal record of who completes an entire training program, but it is very difficult, if not impossible, to extract this information from the current Practitioner Registry database—and to have confidence that the data is accurate.
- The Training Registry data elements need to be modified to ensure that specific information is recorded, so that DCCECE and other stakeholders can have routine reports prepared that will give them an overall picture of the delivery of ECE professional development opportunities within the state. These reports will serve dual purposes. First, they will help DCCECE make informed decisions with respect to the what, were, when, and how regarding the delivery of professional development opportunities to the ECE workforce (i.e., the reports can help identify gaps that exist in the current delivery system, or imbalances in what is delivered to which group of practitioners or trainers). Second, the reports will serve as a monitoring tool for DCCECE to review the contractual

requirements of the different training organizations. These reports should include aggregate data for each training event (e.g., Pre-K Ella: Overview of Pre-K Literacy Ages 3 and 4) and each trainer/training organization.

Arkansas' Key Content Areas and Core Competencies

for Early Care and Education Professionals



2009

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In addition to the Arkansas Teaching Standards, Early Childhood Education Birth-Kindergarten teachers will demonstrate knowledge and/or competencies in the following areas:

<p>1. Development of Young Children, Developmentally Appropriate Approaches to Learning, and Individual Differences</p> <p>ATS (InTASC): Standards 1, 2, NAEYC: 1a-c, 4a-d CEC: 1.1, 1.2 Praxis II (0023/5023): Ia – Ii</p>	<p>1.1 Know and understand young children's characteristics and needs from birth through kindergarten.</p> <p>1.2 Know and understand the multiple influences on early development and learning</p> <p>1.3 Use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children.</p> <p>1.4 Understand positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children</p> <p>1.5 Know and understand effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology</p> <p>1.6 Use a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching /learning approaches</p> <p>1.7 Reflect on own practice to promote positive outcomes for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>1.8 Understand how language, culture and family background influence the learning of every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>1.9 Use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of every child, including those with exceptionalities</p>
<p>2. Learning Environments</p> <p>ATS (InTASC): Standard 3 NAEYC: CEC: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 Praxis II (0023/5023): IVa - IVm</p>	<p>2.1 Work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>2.2 Through collaboration with general educators and other colleagues, create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments to engage every child, including those with exceptionalities, in very meaningful learning activities and social interactions</p> <p>2.3 Use motivational and instructional interventions to teach every child, including those with exceptionalities, how to adapt to different environments</p> <p>2.4 Know how to intervene safely and appropriately with every child, including those with exceptionalities, in crisis situations</p>

ATS (InTASC) = Arkansas Teaching Standards (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium)

CEC = Council for Exceptional Children

NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children

Praxis II (0023/5023) = Praxis II Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Assessment

<p>3. Content Knowledge, Curriculum Building and Instructional Planning/Strategies</p> <p>ATS (InTASC): Standards 4, 5, 7, 8 NAEYC: 5a, 5b, 5c CEC: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 Praxis II (0023/5023): IIIa - IIIk</p>	<p>3.1 Know, understand and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the content areas or academic disciplines at the B-K level, including common core state standards</p> <p>3.2 Use own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, including Common Core State Standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.3 Organize knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, and develop meaningful learning progressions for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.4 Understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to all students, and individualize learning for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.5 Modify and individualize general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.6 Consider every child's abilities, interests, learning environments and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development and adaptation of learning experiences for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.7 Use technologies to support instructional planning, delivery and assessment</p> <p>3.8 Is familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.9 Use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.10 Develop and implement a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families and teams</p> <p>3.11 Teach to mastery and promote generalization of learning for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>3.12 Teach cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to every child, including those with exceptionalities</p>
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<p>4. Assessment and Documentation</p> <p>ATS (InTASC): Standard 6</p> <p>NAEYC: 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d</p> <p>CEC: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</p> <p>Praxis II (0023/5023): IIII - IIII</p>	<p>4.1 Understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment – including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>4.2 Know about and use observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection</p> <p>4.3 Understand and practice responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for every child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities</p> <p>4.4 Know about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments</p> <p>4.5 Select and use technically sound formal and informal assessments that minimize bias</p> <p>4.6 Use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>4.7 In collaboration with colleagues and families, use multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about every child, including those with exceptionalities</p> <p>4.8 Engage every child, including those with exceptionalities, to work towards quality learning and performance and provide feedback to guide them</p>
<p>5. Relationships and Collaboration with Families, Colleagues, and Community</p> <p>ATS (InTASC): Standards 3, 7, 10</p> <p>NAEYC: 2a, 2b, 2c</p> <p>CEC: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3</p> <p>Praxis II (0023/5023): Va - Ve</p>	<p>5.1 Know about and understand diverse family and community characteristics</p> <p>5.2 Support, engage and empower families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships</p> <p>5.3 Involve families and communities in young children’s development and learning, incorporating early intervention approaches</p> <p>5.4 Have knowledge and understanding of evidenced-based Arkansas Home Visiting Network models that serve children, parents, and families during pregnancy and until children enter kindergarten</p> <p>5.5 Use the theory and elements of effective collaboration</p> <p>5.6 Serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues</p> <p>5.7 Use collaboration and advocacy to promote the well-being of every child, including those with exceptionalities, across a wide range of settings and collaborators</p>

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NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children

Praxis II (0023/5023) = Praxis II Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Assessment

<p>6. Professionalism and Ethical Practice</p> <p>ATS (InTASC): Standards 9, 10</p> <p>NAEYC: 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e</p> <p>CEC: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6</p> <p>Praxis II (0023/5023): VIa - VIe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Identify and involve self with the early childhood field 6.2 Know about and uphold ethical standards and other early childhood professional guidelines 6.3 Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice, using technology effectively with young children, with peers, and as a professional resource 6.4 Integrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education 6.5 Engage in informed advocacy for young children and the early childhood profession 6.6 Use professional ethical principles and professional practice standards to guide their practice 6.7 Understand how foundational knowledge and current issues influence professional practice 6.8 Understand that diversity is a part of students' families, cultures, and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services 6.9 Understand the significance of lifelong learning and participate in in professional activities and learning communities 6.10 Advance the profession by engaging in activities such as advocacy and mentoring 6.11 Provide guidance and direction to para-educators, tutors, and volunteers
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ATS (InTASC) = Arkansas Teaching Standards (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium)

CEC = Council for Exceptional Children

NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children

Praxis II (0023/5023) = Praxis II Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Assessment

Arkansas Definition of School Readiness (revised March 2013)

School ready children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and lifelong learning. School readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve ALL children, so they are successful in school and in life.

Arkansas Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (revised June 2013)

Family members can help preschool children learn the following skills so that they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten.

Social and Emotional Development- Engaging in healthy relationships and interactions with others

- ✓ Children pay attention.
- ✓ Children follow rules.
- ✓ Children show curiosity and be engaged in learning.
- ✓ Children identify how others feel with words.
- ✓ Children express care and concern for others.
- ✓ Children cooperate with others.
- ✓ Children understand the consequences of their and others behavior.
- ✓ Children understand people and roles in the community.
- ✓ Children adapt to new environments with appropriate behaviors and emotions.

Language Development-- Using language to talk with others and learn new things

- ✓ Children use language to express their needs and ideas.
- ✓ Children speak in complete sentences
- ✓ Children use new words in sentences.
- ✓ Children use a variety of different words in their daily speech.

Phonological Awareness- Understanding that language can be broken into words, syllables and sounds.

- ✓ Children recognize the letters in their name.
- ✓ Children recognize their first name in print.
- ✓ Children recognize print in everyday life.

- ✓ Children recognize basic characteristics of books.
- ✓ Children recognize how books are read.
- ✓ Children recognize basic characteristics of books.

- ✓ Children identify words that rhyme.

- ✓ Children name the letters of the alphabet.
- ✓ Children recognize that letters of the alphabet have distinct sounds.

Writing- Communicating through drawing, symbols and letters

- ✓ Children experiment with writing tools and materials.
- ✓ Children copy lines, circles, crosses, and other symbols.
- ✓ Children begin to write the letters of their name.
- ✓ Children use drawing, symbols or letters to express ideas.

Cognitive Development-- Learning through every day experiences

- ✓ Children identify the basic colors.
- ✓ Children notice similarities and differences.
- ✓ Children match two objects that are the same.
- ✓ Children sort and classify objects by characteristics that go together.
- ✓ Children engage in storytelling with adults and peers.
- ✓ Children retell a simple story that has been read to them.

Math and Science-- The use of words and numbers to describe relationships and solving problems

- ✓ Children count numbers in order.
- ✓ Children recognize numbers in the everyday environment.
- ✓ Children tell you how many are in a group of objects.
- ✓ Children recognize shapes by name.
- ✓ Children predict what might happen next.
- ✓ Children identify more than one solution to a problem.
- ✓ Children not give up easily when solving problems.

Physical Activity -- Moving and coordinating small and large muscles.

- ✓ Children control large muscle movement.
- ✓ Children hop, skip, jump, run, catch and bounce a ball.

Qualls Early Learning Guidelines

A committee of Arkansas teachers and administrators from throughout the state developed the following recommended guidelines.

The following *QELI* Administration Guidelines are recommended in order to establish statewide uniform interpretation.

- a. ELL Population
- b. Rubric for rating
- c. Teacher-to-Teacher Uniformity
- d. Student-to-Student Uniformity
- e. Expectations of the *QELI*
 - i. Intentions of the tool
 - ii. Directions for observing (Link)
 - iii. Inappropriate Purposes of the *QELI*

Overview

1. The Qualls Early Learning Inventory (*QELI*) is an assessment tool for the use in the primary grades to identify student development in six behavioral characteristics related to school learning.
2. The *QELI* is intended for kindergarten and early first grade.
3. The *QELI* is a quick “snapshot” of the child entering Kindergarten.
4. Please observe efficiently before completing the Inventory.

Purpose

1. The primary purpose of the *QELI* is to organize information for teachers to support instruction decisions they need to make about individual children and class groups.
 - a. Describe the developmental level of a student.
 - b. To use the *QELI* as supplemental information or snapshot of a student’s entering kindergarten skills.
 - c. To describe certain learning-related behaviors of students with special needs and those whose first language is not English
 - d. To assist identifying students who might be at risk due to delayed development.

- e. To provide information for planning instructional programs for individual students and/or groups.
- f. Provide ADE assistance in better preparing entering kindergarten students.

Inappropriate Purposes

- 1. The *QELI* is not used to determine special education referral.
- 2. The *QELI* is not used to discourage public kindergarten or placement in a transitional class.
- 3. The *QELI* is not used to evaluate preschool programs.
- 4. The *QELI* is not used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction of a teacher.

Information

Various K teachers on the committee made the comment that it forced them to stop and observe the children and not focus so much on the prescribed instruction.

Guidance

- 1. All required responses shall be in English.
 - a. Arkansas is an English speaking state.
 - b. In order to have Teacher-to-Teacher uniformity, the *QELI* can not depend on the teacher's ability to understand and interpret another language.
- 2. Interpreters are not allowed to do the observation.
 - a. Office of Civil Rights would not approve.
 - b. Not enough interpreters for all the languages within our state.
 - c. In order to have Teacher-to-Teacher and a Student-to-Student uniformity, the *QELI* cannot depend on the teacher's ability to understand and interpret another language.
- 3. Oral Communication section responses **MUST** be in English.

Rubric Responses

Rarely - The skill is observed once in a while. Skill must have been observed at least one time.

Sometimes - The skill has been observed but not observed consistently or on a regular basis.

Often - The skill has consistently been demonstrated.

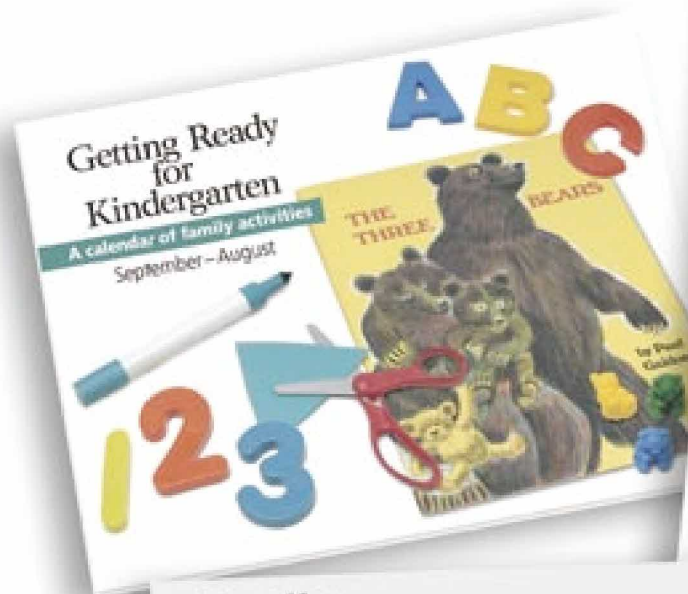
Some - - The skill has been observed but not observed consistently or on a regular basis .

Most - The skill has consistently been demonstrated.

LINK

for Teachers

*Kindergarten Readiness Indicator
Checklist Instructional Link*



**Qualls
Early Learning
Inventory**

**Qualls Early
Learning Inventory**

KRIC

Calendar

Benchmarks

Frameworks

Work Samplings

Head Start

KRIC Instructional LINK for Teachers

Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist

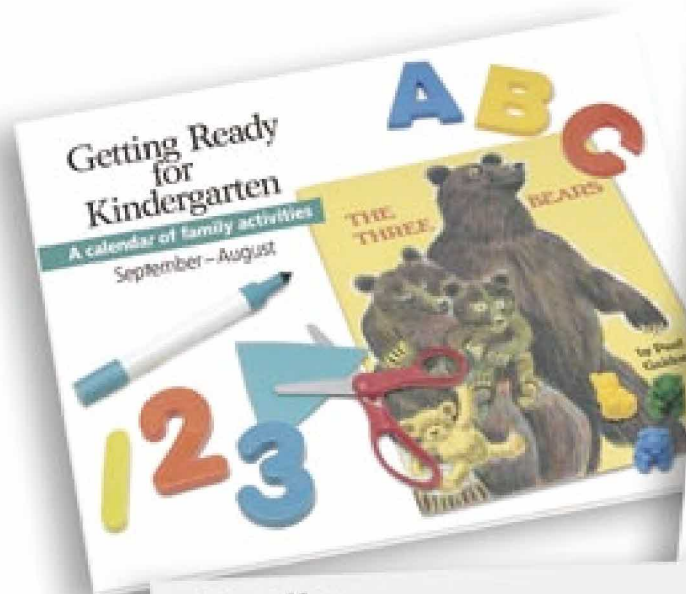
I. Expressiveness and Language Comprehension

EC Benchmarks	Work Sampling	Head Start Outcomes	QELI	ADE Frameworks	KRIC Indicators	Rating			Comments
						Not Yet	Emerging	Consistently	
5.2	II.B.1	HS-LD	6	OV.1.K.3	<p>1. Uses effective oral communication skills and speaks in complete sentences;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses sentences of five to six (or more) words; • Has almost adult like speech; • Can verbally express the highlights of the day; • Utters compound sentences with connecting words such as “and” and “but”; • Describes and discusses objects such as seashells or pinecones; • Describes what is happening in discussion pictures. 				
5.10	II.A.2	HS-LD	38	OV.1.K.5 OV.2.K.3	<p>2. Understands and follows directions with at least two steps;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows directions that involve two steps (“Take off your coat and hang it up.”); • Tells about “Going to Wal-Mart, then to church and then home; • Retells a story, such as “<i>The Three Bears</i>”, in sequence; • Tells in sequence routine things (getting dressed in the morning or going to bed at night); • Follows directions in songs such as “<i>Hokey Pokey</i>”; • Tells, in order, the daily classroom schedule; • Puts photos of daily schedule in order. 				

LINK

for Parents

*Kindergarten Readiness Indicator
Checklist Instructional Link*



**Qualls
Early Learning
Inventory**

**Qualls Early
Learning Inventory**

KRIC

Calendar

Benchmarks

Frameworks

Work Samplings

Head Start

Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist for Parents/Families

Here are some examples of how you can know if your child is achieving the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators. Add examples of your own.

QELI	Kindergarten Readiness Indicator	Examples of what you observed
6	Indicator 1: Speaks in complete sentences (Calendar: February) Your child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tells you what he or she did during a visit to a friend talks about some things that happened at his or her preschool center talks about a family event that you and your child attended together 	
38	Indicator 2: Follows directions with at least two steps (Calendar: February) Your child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows your directions, such as "Pick up your plate and put it on the cabinet" tells you, in order, the things he/she does to get ready for bed tells you, in order, what he/she did at preschool ("We played in centers, had snacks, went to the playground, ate lunch and took a nap") 	
3 4	Indicator 3: Understands words, such as 'top' and 'bottom', 'big' and 'little' (Calendar: February) Your child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> looks at pictures in a book and retells a story, such as "<i>The Three Billy Goats Gruff</i>." Then, with your guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows you the picture of the <u>little</u> Billy Goat, the <u>middle</u> Billy Goat and the <u>big</u> Billy Goat Tells which goat crossed the bridge <u>first</u>, <u>next</u> and <u>last</u>. Says that the troll was <u>under</u> the bridge and the goats crossed <u>over</u> the bridge lines up family members' shoes from <u>smallest</u> to <u>largest</u>. follows directions in a game you play together ("Put the car <u>on</u> the table" "Put the car <u>under</u> the table" "Put the car <u>behind</u> the couch" "Put the car <u>besides</u> the couch") 	

Letters of Support



STATE OF ARKANSAS

MIKE BEEBE
GOVERNOR

September 19, 2013

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: CFDA Number 84.412A, LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

To Whom It May Concern:

As Governor of Arkansas, I enthusiastically support the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge proposal submitted by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education of the Arkansas Department of Human Services, which will serve as lead agency. During my first term as Governor, I made significant investments in early childhood education by supporting a \$40 million appropriation to the AR Better Chance state-funded preschool program and have continued my support in spite of a recession and slowly rebounding economy.

The RTT-ELC funding provides a unique opportunity for Arkansas to build and expand on a better coordinated system of early learning and development, so that more high-needs children from birth to age five have access to dramatically improved early learning and development programs and are able to start kindergarten with a strong foundation for future learning and life success. The RTT-ELC competition will provide needed incentives and supports to Arkansas for its commitment and delivery of high-quality early learning and development programs statewide and improving outcomes for children. We look forward to the opportunity and challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Beebe".
Mike Beebe

MB:jb

STATE CAPITOL, SUITE 250 • LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201
TELEPHONE: (501) 682-2345 • FAX: (501) 682-1382
INTERNET WEB SITE: www.governor.arkansas.gov



September 16, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Little Rock chapter of the American Association of University Women is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The mission of the AAUW is advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Since our founding in 1881, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political. The Little Rock chapter joins in those efforts both for supporting quality early childhood education and in providing career advancement opportunities for women and men serving as early childhood educators.

We at AAUW-LR are particularly interested in Arkansas's application emphasis on professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data that will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education. We hope to share our involvement in efforts to improve the professional status of women in the workforce. We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children and the quality of training and experience for the workforce caring for them.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Maria Jones
Branch President
AAUW Little Rock, Inc.



October 11, 2013

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education
Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

1401 West Capitol Avenue
Suite 300, Victory Building
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

www.achi.net

501-526-ACI11 (2244)
501-526-2252 (Fax)

Dear Ms. Delisle:

The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas educationally and economically. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas's application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. To help attain that goal, the wellbeing of the whole child must be considered, both mental and physical. The Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education's (DCCECE) focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement, and partnerships includes components that address nutrition, physical activity and immunizations. This comprehensive vision will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

*ACHI's mission
is to be a catalyst for
improving the health
of Arkansans through
evidence-based research,
public issue advocacy,
and collaborative
program development.*

ACHI has a long history of collaboration and consultation with DCCECE. Most recently, we have engaged in efforts related to the Better Beginnings implementation workgroup, the Arkansas Healthy Children Workbook, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) adult immunization project, and additions to center licensure requirements for child care staff immunizations. On-going professional development partnerships to enhance the skill base of child care providers include the Best Care Connected and Healthy Childcare Arkansas programs. We look forward to a positive result for this application and to continuing our collaborative work with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Michelle Justus, MS, RDN, LD
Director, Disease Prevention Health Promotion

A partnership of
Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Arkansas Children's Hospital
Arkansas Department of Health
Delta Dental of Arkansas
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences



Arkansas Association
of Educational Administrators

219 South Victory
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.372.1681
Fax: 501.372.2807
www.maeaa.org

September 20, 2013

Race To The Top – Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators is pleased to support the Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT–ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators was incorporated over 30 years ago with the goal of seeking continual improvement in the quality of education and educational leadership in Arkansas. This is evident in the AAEA's vision statement. "...to be the primary resource for school administrators by promoting and providing leadership for the advancement of education, and by engaging in activities that...provide support for quality education."

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Richard Abernathy, Ed.D.
Executive Directors



Arkansas Children's Hospital

1 Children's Way • Little Rock, AR 72202-3591 • 501/364-1100
www.archildrens.org



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President / Chief Executive Officer

David T. Berry
Senior Vice President / Chief Operating Officer

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Senior Vice President / Public Affairs

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W. Robert Morrow, M.D.
Senior Vice President / Medical Director

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President / ACH Foundation

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9/16/2013

September 16, 2013

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

Arkansas Children's Hospital [ACH] is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. ACH has long been a partner with various Arkansas state agencies in promoting improved health status of our children. We believe that improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically. To that end, we have supported the Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters [HIPPY] in Arkansas since 1990, serve as the implementing organization for the Arkansas Expanded MIECHV program, and have engaged over 34 organizations and agencies to collaborate on improving children's health. Additionally, ACH has brought the Health Teacher Health Literacy program to all public schools in Arkansas this year. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and to close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools and community support in order to serve all children, to assist them in becoming successful in school and in life. The focus of this application on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data, will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

ACH will continue to be an active partner in working with our Arkansas Home Visiting Network, our work with the Expansion MIECHV home visitation efforts, our support of the Arkansas HIPPY program, our work to improve Health Literacy for all children and our efforts through the Natural Wonders Partnership Council to facilitate improved services to children in Arkansas.

We look forward to extending our partnership with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education as well as other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for the children in Arkansas.

Cordially,

(b)(6)

Scott Gordon, LCSW
Executive Vice President
Arkansas Children's Hospital

Arkansas Children's Hospital is the comprehensive clinical, research, & teaching affiliate of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.
UAMS pediatric faculty physicians and surgeons are on the staff at Arkansas Children's Hospital.



Arkansas HIPPY

1 Children's Way, Slot 651
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202
Office: (501) 364-3671 * Fax: (501) 364-2225

September 17, 2013

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas State HIPPY Office fully supports the state of Arkansas' application for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge. Arkansas has worked to ameliorate the quality of early childhood education to enhance and promote both education and economic opportunities during the last ten years. Arkansas has made great progress and has a sound foundation in early childhood. The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funds would give Arkansas the opportunity to add many essential components for an excellent and high quality early childhood program in a rural state facing challenges in meeting the needs of special populations and high needs children and families.

The Arkansas State HIPPY Office appreciates and understands Arkansas' early childhood leaders and their foresight and goals as they skillfully develop and write an application for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge which would ensure that children and families are served and supported in a manner that will give them a skill set that prepares them for life. Skills that will prepare them to succeed in school by meeting the needs of the whole child in a developmentally appropriate manner for each child, family and program type. In order to meet these requirements, the early childhood leaders in Arkansas are developing strategies to build systems to: address necessary improvements and changes to the quality rating improvement system; professional development opportunities and plans; ensure the children and families with the greatest needs have access to high quality programs and services; promote and utilize early learning and development standards in all state and federally funded programs; ensure family engagement and support systems are designed and implemented to meet the needs of all populations; develop an early childhood workforce to meet the needs of all children and families in our state; design and use a data system to improve early childhood education; and coordinate all the systems and programs mentioned above to ensure that school readiness occurs when children and their families access and use the programs and services.

The Arkansas State HIPPY Office provides support, training and monitoring for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) which is an evidenced-based

"Creating a Bright Future for Children and Families"

program that works with families in the home to support parents in their critical role as their child's first and most important teacher. HIPPY strengthens communities and families by empowering parents to actively prepare their children for success in school. Parents are provided with a set of carefully developed curriculum, books and materials designed to strengthen their children's cognitive skills, early literacy skills, social/emotional and physical development. HIPPY programs serve families from diverse ethnic and geographic groups across the state, particularly those most at risk because of poverty, parents' limited education and social isolation.

The Arkansas State HIPPY Office and staff looks forward to collaborating with The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, The Arkansas Home Visiting Network, Head Start and other state agencies in a partnership that will result in higher quality and appropriate programs and services for children and families in Arkansas. The Arkansas State HIPPY Office will support and assist as necessary to ensure the success of the systems and programs designed and implemented with the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge monies.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Beverly Wright
Arkansas State HIPPY Director



September 16, 2013

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW. Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Early Childhood Association (AECA) is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

AECA is a non-profit organization comprised of early childhood professionals and parents who share a common concern about the well-being of young children and their families. For more than 50 years, AECA has worked for quality care and education for the children of Arkansas. In conjunction with its affiliation with the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), a 13 state regional organization, our goals are to expand professional growth opportunities, produce beneficial publications, and support public policy issues for southern children. This organization will collaborate with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to provide support and communication to early educators on any new initiatives resulting from RTT-ELC.

We look forward to collaborating with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

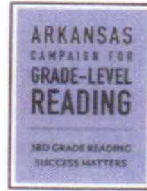
Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jamie Morrison
President-Elect

PO Box 2898 Little Rock, AR 72203 E-mail: info@arkansasearlychildhood.org (501)221-2635

Visit our website www.arkansasearlychildhood.org



September 24, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR) is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application submitted by the state of Arkansas. AR-GLR's goal is that, by 2020, all Arkansas children will read on grade level by the end of third grade. One of our key strategies for achieving this goal is to ensure that all children are ready for school.

Arkansas has made great strides around school readiness over the past decade. The RTT-ELC is a terrific opportunity for Arkansas to continue and expand this success so we can move forward toward AR-GLR's goal that all children read proficiently so they can graduate from high school and obtain the post-secondary skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

AR-GLR will support the RTT-ELC in a variety of ways. We are helping to build local capacity through grants from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to communities around the state that have launched their own AR-GLR campaigns. These local efforts include strategies related to school readiness and parent engagement. We have also launched Arkansas Make Every Day Count, an effort to help local school districts quantify chronic absence and develop solutions for increasing attendance, as early as pre-K.

We are supporting communications efforts about the importance of school readiness through public service announcements that are airing during children's programming on AETN, our statewide PBS affiliate. Through a legislative interim study, we will be making policy

recommendations around grade-level reading that will include school readiness and addressing the goals of our RTT-ELC proposal.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Angela Duran
Campaign Director



ARKANSAS HEAD START STATE COLLABORTION OFFICE

September 18, 2013

Tonya Williams, Director
Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education
700 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Ms. Williams:

The Arkansas Head Start Association and the Head Start State Collaboration Office, in partnership with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, is pleased to be an active partner in the proposed "Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant."

The Arkansas Head Start community strives to provide excellence in the provision of comprehensive early education, which includes an emphasis on building and maintaining strong partnerships, using an appropriate assessment, professional development, family engagement, quality improvement and services for children and families. All of which are a focus of your Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant. We are delighted to have the opportunity to join this partnership with your agency to provide assistance in policy review, revision of the state early learning standards, professional development training opportunities, and working with high needs early childhood programs in the state.

We are committed to the proposed changes outlined in the RTT grant and will work with you to make those quality changes in the state. We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts on improving child and family outcomes for young children and ensuring best-practices in education and quality comprehensive services in child care & early education settings throughout Arkansas.

With Warm regards,

(b)(6)

Pam Draper, President
Arkansas Head Start Association

JD

(b)(6)

Jacqueline Dedman, Director
Collaboration Director

Union Station □ 1400 West Markham Street, Suite 406 □ Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
(501) 371-0740 □ Fax (501) 370-9109 □ www.arheadstart.org



Kathy Pillow-Price, Ed.D, Director
Arkansas Home Visiting Network
415 N. McKinley – Suite 860
Little Rock, AR 72205

October 1, 2013

Tonya Williams, Director
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S140
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Dear Ms. Williams:

This letter is written to express commitment on behalf of the Arkansas Home Visiting Network (AHVN) for your application concerning Race to the Top. We wholeheartedly join you in this mission to secure funding that will benefit young Arkansas children and the professionals that work with them.

It is with pleasure that we send you this letter of support. We want to thank you for including home visiting in all your recent meetings and for considering the needs of the home visiting community in Arkansas as you make decisions. We feel we are moving in a positive direction by integrating the preventive work of home visiting into the overall Arkansas early childhood system. Arkansas home visitors address such issues as maternal and child health, positive parenting practices, child development, safe home environments, literacy, school readiness and resource and referral access including referrals to child care when applicable.

Many programs represented by the AHVN have very blended funding. At AHVN we are thrilled to have MIECHV funding to help reach the highest need families prenatally up through age five. We are equally pleased to have our home visiting programs receive ABC funding from the state in our joint effort to work on school readiness for children ages 3-5. Because of both MIECHV and ABC state funding to support home visiting many children will go to school kindergarten ready. While many schools in our state provide quality preschools they do not provide transportation for pre-k children. This is a place in which our home visitors fill a needed gap especially for rural families in our state that lack transportation. We are delighted that our state recognizes and invests in home visiting because in some cases it is the only source for kindergarten readiness.

415 N. McKinley Street • Suite 860 • Little Rock • AR • 72205 • 501.364.5460 • www.arhomevisiting.org

Tonya Williams
October 1, 2013
Page 2

preparation. We believe that continued collaboration between MIECHV and ABC funded programs is essential to help children and families move towards school readiness.

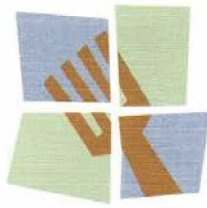
We are confident that the scope of work described in your RTT application is well suited to the needs of Arkansas and we believe that your team brings extensive experience and knowledge to be able to accomplish the outlined tasks. We are excited for you to be given an opportunity to use your past accomplishments and know-how to continue to benefit young children in Arkansas.

We at the Arkansas Home Visiting Network are committed to helping you with your endeavors and look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Kathy Pillow-Price, Ed.D
Director, Arkansas Home Visiting Network



arkansas
Hunger Relief
alliance

1400 W. Markham, Suite 304 | Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
501.399.9999 | fax: 501.399.9996

www.ARhungeralliance.org

One Mission, One Voice — Working Together to End Hunger

October 11, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance's mission is to reduce hunger through a unified effort to provide hunger relief, education and advocacy. Our mission is strengthened by our collaboration with many state agencies when we provide programs that encourage and support families and early childhood development.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Kathy Webb
Executive Director



Mike Beebe
Governor



Idonia L. Trotter, JD, MPS
Executive Director

523 Louisiana, Suite 425 • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 • (877) 264-2826 • (501) 686-2720 • Fax: (501) 686-2722

Willa Black Sanders, MPA

Chair
Assistant Dean, Governmental Relations
Pay W. Boozman College
of Public Health, UAMS
(Maumelle)

Raul Blasini

Retired Army
(Pocahontas)

Janice M. Bush, RN, BSN, MSN

Retired Registered Nurse
(El Dorado)

Vanessa Davis

Assistant Director, Cultural Diversity
and Minority Affairs,
Division of Behavioral Health, DHS
(Little Rock)

F. Roosevelt Gilliam, III, MD

Arkansas Cardiology Associates
of Northeast Arkansas
(Jonesboro)

Sandra Kennedy-Mitchell

Office Manager, Joe Harris, Jr. Trucking Inc.
Piney Ridge Mental Health Facility
(Osceola)

Linda McGhee, MD

Associate Professor, Department
of Family & Preventive Medicine,
AHEC Northwest, UAMS
(Prairie Grove)

Willie McGhee

City Councilman
(El Dorado)

Carolyn Mosley, PhD, RN,

CS, FAAN
Dean, College of Health Sciences
UA-Fort Smith
(Fort Smith)

Carmen T. Paniagua, EdD, RN, MSN,

CPC, APN, ACNP-BC, APNG, FAANP
Clinical Associate Professor
College of Nursing & College of Medicine, UAMS
(Little Rock)

Christine Patterson, MSW, LCSW

Retired-Director, Office of Minority Health
and Health Disparities, ADH
(Redfield)

Martha M. Phillips, PhD, MPH, MBA, EdS

Interim Chair, Department of Epidemiology,
College of Public Health, Assistant Professor,
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral
Sciences, College of Medicine, UAMS
(Little Rock)

September 16, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge

US Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW.

Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The (Arkansas Minority Health Commission) is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The mission of The Arkansas Minority Health Commission is to ensure all minority Arkansans access to health care that is equal to the care provided to other citizens of the state and to seek ways to provide education, address issues and prevent diseases and conditions that are prevalent among minority populations.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Idonia L. Trotter, JD, MPS

IT/hd

www.arminorityhealth.com



Arkansas Rural Ed Association

1309 Texas Street

Mena, AR 71953

479-234-2733

September 16, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Rural Ed. Association (AREA) is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. As educators and leaders of our local schools, we understand the needs children have in rural areas particularly for early childhood education.

The AREA works with 136 out of 239 school districts in Arkansas. AREA is dedicated to improving instruction and promoting quality education for all students in rural schools throughout the state, and it provides a unified voice for representing rural school districts to legislative bodies and public officials. We plan to begin working with our districts, especially those with declining enrollments, to assess the interest and demand for expanding early childhood education in our local schools. This is our first step to resolving the needs and reversing any barriers to this effort.

We look forward to expanding our current partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education and developing new relationships with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Bill Abernathy, Executive Director

September 25, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The *Arkansas Special Education Early Childhood Professionals (ASEP)* is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Arkansas Special Education Early Childhood Professionals (ASEP) purposes shall be to: maintain and elevate the professional and ethical standard of the special education early childhood 3-5 profession in Arkansas; improve the special education standards in the schools in the state of Arkansas; promote the welfare and professional growth of the members of the ASEP; establish and maintain liaison between other professional organizations with like purposes; develop a favorable relationship with public and elected officials of Arkansas; provide a means for the ASEP to have a collective influence in the establishment and execution of special education policies within Arkansas; keep the membership informed of state and national events and activities that promote or adversely affect special education in Arkansas.

ASEP will support and partner with other agencies seeking to provide high-quality early childhood programs. High-quality early childhood programs for a young child improves their

health and promotes their development and learning. Good quality preschool programs provide a strong foundation in partnership with families and promote every child's optimal development. ASEP promotes inclusion of children with disabilities as a best practice goal. ASEP works closely with the Arkansas Department of Education 3-5 program to enable young children to be active and successful participants during the early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings—in their homes with their families, in child care, in preschool programs, and in the community. A large majority of our children with disabilities are receiving their services in an Arkansas Better Chance classroom with their non-disabled peers. We address three child outcomes: positive social emotional skills; acquisition and use of knowledge and skills including early language and communication; and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. This data is then used to identify strengths and weaknesses of programs and used to improve programs, provides information for policymakers to justify future funding and to provide information for families who as consumers have the right to know if their child's program is effective. ASEP provides annual conferences specifically focused on topics to support an integrated early childhood professional development system and to better train a competent and stable workforce of skilled early childhood educators working with children with disabilities in community settings. ASEP board members are made up of the early childhood coordinators of the sixteen educational cooperatives and each cooperative offers numerous pertinent topics throughout the year specific to needs in their respective Coop areas and training is available for licensed early childhood providers to attend either free of charge or a minimal charge. ASEP members are available to provide consultation to facilitate the assessment and resolution of a specific concern of a community program. Early childhood coordinators promote seamless transitions between the state's first connection program for 0-3 yrs to EC 3-5 program and to promote successful transitions from state's 3-5 programs to school-age program 5-21. ASEP maintains supports and promotes professional attitudes and ethics while serving children and families in the state of Arkansas and believes that when we are better together, our children get a better start. The end result of partnering with other agencies serving early childhood will result in long-term quality outcomes for children, families and early childhood education programs.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Diana Hicks, President

Association of Arkansas Special Education Early Childhood Professionals



Arkansas State Library

900 West Capitol Ave., Suite 100 - Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3108

October 11, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas State Library is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the State of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas's application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships (with an emphasis on data) will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Arkansas State Library provides guidance and support for the development of local public libraries and library services, and provides the resources, services, and leadership necessary to meet the educational, informational and cultural needs of the citizens of Arkansas. Literacy begins at birth and a child's success in learning to read is critically linked to their exposure to books. "The single most important activity for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children," stressed **Becoming a Nation of Readers**, a 1985 report by the Commission on Reading. Public libraries have a vital role in the development of early literacy skills by providing early experiences with books and stories (i.e. storytime for infants and toddlers, summer reading programs, training for new parents on how to read to their baby, age appropriate book suggestions, outreach to daycare centers, etc.)

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Respectfully yours,

(b)(6)

Carolyn Ashcraft
State Librarian/Director



October 8, 2013

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education
US Department of Education, Washington DC

Dear Ms. Delisle:

I strongly encourage the DHS Arkansas Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education to consider the Race to the Top grant application to provide a high quality education to every child and to improve the health of our state and nation and to strengthen our economy.

Arkansas has an infrastructure in place to carry-out duties and responsibilities of Race to the Top, to embrace innovative approaches to teaching and learning in Arkansas' school-age and pre-school programs.

ChildCare Aware of Northeast Arkansas/Lonoke County looks forward to our working partnership with the State of Arkansas, DHS Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education. We believe that this is the best agency to identify, reach and support innovations for people who will benefit from them statewide.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Jo Battle, Program Manager
ChildCare Aware of NE/Lonoke County
ASU Childhood Services, Jonesboro AR



September 16, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

Child Care Aware of Northcentral Arkansas is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

Child Care Aware of Northcentral Arkansas is one of six Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in the state of Arkansas. Our agency is dedicated to enhancing the quality and availability of childcare; advocating for children; and providing information, education, guidance, and support to parents, providers, employers and communities. The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education has supported our endeavors tremendously for the past 16 years by providing professional development, technical assistance, guidance and funding which has enabled Child Care Aware of Northcentral Arkansas to be the successful agency it is today.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Debbie Webb

Director, Child Care Aware of Northcentral Arkansas

PO Box 2396, Batesville, AR 72503-2396 PH (870) 793-5233 Toll Free (800) 737-2237 FX (870) 793-4035 www.ccana.org

A Program of White River Planning and Development, Inc.



A PROGRAM OF JEFFERSON COMPREHENSIVE CARE SYSTEM, INC.

1203 West Pullen Street
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601
870-536-0520 /Fax: 870-536-0533

October 7, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The ChildCare Aware of Southeast Arkansas and Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc. Parents as Teachers is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

ChildCare Aware of Southeast Arkansas and Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc. Parents as Teachers, a childcare resource and referral agency and family support, parenting program is very hopeful and excited about the possible continued and expanded partnership with the State.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

Elaine Davis

ChildCare Aware of Southeast Arkansas / Parents as Teachers Program Director



September 16, 2013

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that the Child Care Aware of Northwest Arkansas and the River Valley provide a letter of support for the state of Arkansas to submit an application to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application. The state of Arkansas has made many strides in their efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education and development statewide. It is critical to the future of Arkansas children to be offered the funding provided by the Race to the Top- Early Learning Grant to improve the educational, social, emotional, and physical development of our at-risk children.

Education is the key to decreasing our poverty levels in Arkansas. The support of the RTT-ELC program can provide a major impact on the future educational success of our children. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, preparing them to be successful in school and in life. The state of Arkansas has focused on encouraging all child care providers to improve the quality of child care. Arkansas is utilizing a quality rating improvement system to increase and improve professional development plans, family engagement, and partnerships with an emphasis on data which will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Child Care Aware of Northwest Arkansas agency located in the northwest corner of the state serves 14 counties. Some of our counties have experienced a tremendous increase in non-English families moving into our communities with the majority of our families living in poverty. Northwest Arkansas hosts the largest Marshallese population in the United States with many of these families moving to Arkansas to work in the poultry industry which has a history of low wages. The Child Care Aware of Northwest Arkansas has provided education, training, information, and technical support for child care professionals for over twenty years with the guidance and support of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood.

Thank you for your consideration of this grant application. We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 479-751-6166.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Carolene Thornton, Ed.D
Executive Director



Arkansas Department of Health

4815 West Markham Street • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-3867 • Telephone (501) 661-2000

Governor Mike Beebe

Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Health Officer

September 27, 2013

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary of Elementary & Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Race To The Top - Early Learning Challenge
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Ms. Delisle:

The Arkansas Department of Health is please to support the Race To The Top – Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the State of Arkansas. The Race To The Top application is a significant opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for children in Arkansas.

The Department of Health Child and Adolescent Health Section is pleased to work with the Department of Human Services Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education, which is the lead agency. The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. The goal is to have all children as well prepared as possible for kindergarten through professional development and family engagement. It is vital that Arkansas invest in health-related initiatives for young children, particularly in the areas of obesity prevention and health promotion practices in early learning environments.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the health and quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH
Director and State Health Officer



First Connections
Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
Children's Services

PO Box 1437 – Slot N504
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437
1-800-324-3179 TDD: 501-682-1332



September 18, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

First Connections, Arkansas' Part C program under IDEA, is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development so that all children arrive to school ready and able to learn, thus closing the achievement gap for even more children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities work together to support all children, so they are successful in school, at home, and in the community. With a focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and training, inter-agency collaboration, and an emphasis on quality data collection, Arkansas can move forward in significantly improving early childhood development and education.

First Connections operates under the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) / Children's Services unit of the Department of Human Services to provide developmental supports and services to infants/toddlers with developmental delay or disability birth to the third birthday in the child's natural environment (home and community settings in which all children live, learn, and grow). First Connections collaborates with parents and other caregivers (like daycare/childcare providers) to build family and caregiver capacity to enhance the child's development to promote active participation in a variety of settings. With a similar mission to prepare children for life-long learning and to engage and educate parents to promote their child's optimal development, First Connections already works closely with DCCECE, Early Head Start, and local educational cooperatives under the Arkansas Department of Education.

We look forward to expanding our partnership with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and their collaborating state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for all Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Traci Harris, Assistant Director
DDS / Children's Services
traci.harris@arkansas.gov
501-682-8668

First Connections collaborates with families to facilitate the child's participation in family and community activities through intervention linked to specific family-centered goals which support the family's enhancement of their child's development.



1100 HENDERSON STREET ARKADDELPHIA, AR 71999-0001 WWW.HSU.EDU

Teachers College, Henderson

HSU Box 7820
(870) 230-5367 *phone*
(870) 230-5455 *fax*
harrisj@hsu.edu *e-mail*

September 16, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

Teachers College, Henderson State University, is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development so that all children arrive to school ready and able to learn, thus closing the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities work together to support all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement, and partnerships with an emphasis on quality data collection will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education. Teachers College, Henderson is pleased to be a part of this effort. The special education faculty, along with developmental therapy practitioners and representatives from the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Services, have developed the Master of Science in Developmental Therapy for individuals seeking certification as developmental therapists through the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Our Developmental Therapy Program is founded on the belief that all of Arkansas' children should have the opportunity for success.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and their collaborating state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Judy A. Harrison, Ed. D.
Dean, Teachers College
Henderson State University
Arkadelphia, AR 71999-0001

E X C E L L E N C E • S P I R I T • T R A D I T I O N

September 19, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more Arkansas children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention is responsible for jointly maximizing the services for children birth to three years of age in the state of Arkansas in order that these children will be able to grow to their full potential. This council supports the missions of assisting in early intervention services for children with disabilities or at risk for developing disabilities, and their families. Collaboration and partnerships of the agencies and councils could be greatly assisted through RTT-ELC opportunities.

We look forward to continuing to partner with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Frances Black
ICC Chair



September 24, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

OneCommunity is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

OneCommunity is a nonprofit working to build a better quality of life through education, outreach and service. Through programs such as *Parents Taking Leadership Action* (PTLA) and *Feed Your Brain-Alimenta Tu Cerebro Reading Club*, OneCommunity works to build upon the strengths of parents, especially those of English learners, as they learn about their child's academic world and work in partnership with their school and community.

The vision of Arkansas's application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. This fits with the mission of OneCommunity. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely, /

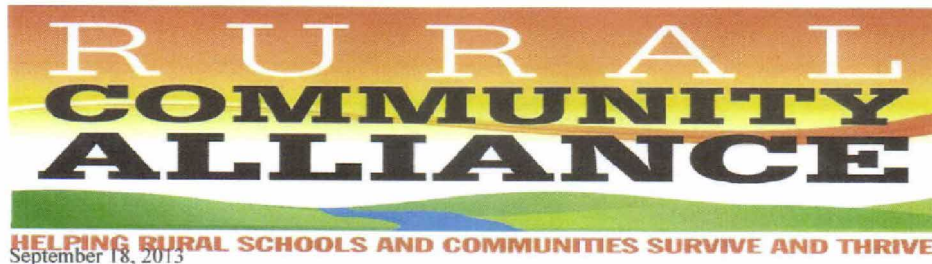
(b)(6)

Alvin "Papa Rap" Lopez
Co-Founder, OneCommunity
Director of Programs

OneCommunity

PO Box 261, Springdale, AR 72765

www.onecommunityar.org



To whom it may concern:

Rural Community Alliance is pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. We know that the success of our rural children is closely correlated with their access to quality preschool. We are pleased that our state has worked steadfastly toward this goal over the past ten years, and we are witness to the positive results of that commitment.

Early childhood education is a critical need in rural Arkansas where poverty, isolation, and transportation challenges intersect to form a barrier for many of our rural families. As more of our rural K-12 schools close due to consolidation caused by a state-mandated enrollment minimum, the preschool in the community typically closes as well. This has put preschool out of reach for many rural families who simply do not have the financial resources to drive their child twice a day to facilities 20+ miles away.

Where a child has not attended preschool, in most cases health and developmental screenings are not done until the child starts Kindergarten. Therefore, at least two critical years of intervention are missed. For example, at a local elementary school where there has been no preschool opportunity, there is a high rate of speech therapy (as high as 50% of K students in some years), as well as hearing and vision problems detected during Kindergarten. These issues could have been addressed years earlier with proper screening and would have been of tremendous benefit to the child's development and school readiness.

Another barrier to quality instruction is the cost of obtaining the Child Development Associate credential in Arkansas. The tuition cost of the program is about \$1,500, and this does not include books and transportation expenses. Rural people who want to work as teacher's aides or paraprofessionals in a preschool generally do not have the funds to pay for this, and the budget for continuing education from existing state preschool grants is not sufficient to cover the cost.

Another barrier for rural preschools is the distance that preschool staff must travel to access required continuing education. Time out of the classroom is an issue as well as cost. Rural preschools could benefit from the use of distance learning, perhaps even using the local school district's equipment where two-way audio/video interaction is available.

Parent engagement is a critical issue for rural preschools where parents could greatly benefit from learning how to be engaged in their child's education as well as having proper interaction and communication with their child modeled. Child development milestones could be taught as well as proper nutrition and good health practices.

Rural Community Alliance's mission is to help rural schools and communities survive and thrive. We have 1,500 members throughout Arkansas within 56 chapters. We will use our network to disseminate information about the RTT-ELC and will assist in recruiting participation. We are also a partner in the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and are already working on the four key campaign areas: school readiness; chronic absence; summer learning loss; community and parent engagement.

Arkansas is already at the track, clad with running gear, ready for the starting gun in the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge!

(b)(6)

Rene Carr, Executive Director
carr@thenewrural.org 15949 Hwy 263 #43 Fox, AR 72051 Phone 870-615-2195 Fax 866-824-9598



SURGEON GENERAL, STATE OF ARKANSAS
JOSEPH W. THOMPSON, MD, MPH

October 11, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

As Surgeon General for the state of Arkansas, I am pleased to support Arkansas's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically. This is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and to close the achievement gap for even more of our children with high needs. The proposal's intersection with efforts to curb the rising tide of obesity in our children will augment their learning capacity.

The vision of Arkansas's application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement, and partnerships, with an emphasis on data, will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

I look forward to witnessing the changes in our children's lives through the efforts of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Joseph W. Thompson, MD, MPH
Arkansas Surgeon General

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Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

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UAMS



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
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UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

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Maternal Fetal Medicine Professor & Chair

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October 10, 2013

Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Center on Distance Health is pleased to be a partner in the proposed telemedicine pilot project as part of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. As discussed in the proposal, the Center has implemented a state-wide telehealth initiative in the state's rural areas. The Center was awarded \$102 million grant in 2010 by the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) within the Department of Commerce to support a statewide \$128-million broadband infrastructure that provides telehealth services to community institutions across Arkansas.

The pilot project will allow the Division of Child Care and Early Education to leverage this significant investment in the state's broadband infrastructure by using RTT-ELC funds to provide referral services through the telemedicine network for children who have been screened for a potential developmentally delay or other issues, and for family medical and mental health issues that impact the well-being of children. This initiative will significantly reduce the time between a positive screen and the appropriate treatment, as well as make a wide range of medical resources and training readily available for providers who treat children with high needs and their families in rural areas.

Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas and part of the mission of the Center on Distance Health. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning, development, and health services to close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

We look forward to partnering with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and other state agencies to significantly improve the quality of early learning for Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Curtis Lowery, M.D.
Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Professor and Chair



UAMS



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES



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September 17, 2013

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

The *Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant* through the *Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute (grantee)* and *Medical Home Work Group (steering group)* are pleased to support the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application submitted by the state of Arkansas. Improving the quality of early childhood education and development is critical to the future of Arkansas both educationally and economically including early childhood in the past 10 years. The RTT-ELC is a great opportunity for Arkansas to continue its efforts to improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for even more AR children with high needs.

The vision of Arkansas' application is to ensure that children have the social and academic knowledge, skills, and behaviors for school success and life-long learning. School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve all children, so they are successful in school and in life. Their focus on quality rating improvement systems, professional development plans, family engagement and partnerships with an emphasis on data will move Arkansas significantly forward in improving early childhood education.

The Medical Home Work Group (MHWG) was established under the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (AECCS) by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education of the



Arkansas Children's Hospital is the comprehensive clinical, research, & teaching affiliate of the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. UAMS pediatric faculty physicians and surgeons are on the staff at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

—ESTABLISHED 1879—



September 30, 2013

J. Joy Nolan
DCC-ECE
Family Support
Program Coordinator
Division of Child Care/Early Childhood Education
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S140
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Dear Ms. Nolan:

The Arkansas Pilot Safe Babies Court Team is pleased to offer this letter of support for the Arkansas *Race To The Top* application. The Safe Babies Court Team is a systems-change initiative focused on improving how the courts, child welfare agencies, and related child-serving organizations work together, share information, and expedite services for young children. The Arkansas Pilot Court Team addresses the project's goals of:

1. Increasing knowledge about the negative impact of abuse and neglect on very young children; and,
2. Changing local systems to improve outcomes and prevent future court involvement in the lives of very young children.

The Arkansas Pilot Safe Babies Court Team is co-led by the Honorable Joyce Williams Warren, Circuit Judge, Pulaski County Juvenile Court; and Community Coordinator Darneshia Bell. The Arkansas Pilot Safe Babies Court Team monitors the cases of children, birth to 3 years of age, who have come into the custody of the Department of Human Services due to abuse or neglect. Thus far, the Arkansas Pilot Safe Babies Court Team, made up of 119 members, has served 29 children.

The Safe Babies Court Team works with the most vulnerable young children in the state: those babies and toddlers who have been abused or neglected by their parents and placed in foster care. They are at the greatest risk for poor developmental outcomes and school failure. While we work very hard with a range of community stakeholders to intervene early to address developmental delays, we know that the children we serve will benefit from the the state's successful Race To The Top application.

The Early Learning Challenge grant program will greatly enhance the state's capability to benefit children in foster care by increasing the number of children with high needs, birth to five, in high-quality early childhood settings. As an ELC grantee, Arkansas will be able to make a number of improvements to our early childhood systems, such as: revising standards for, and expanding participation in, tiered

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quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS); increasing access to high-quality coaching and mentoring for early childhood educators; developing and aligning early learning guidelines (ELGs); and strengthening health and developmental screening practices. These activities are improving the quality of care infants and toddlers receive while their parents are working and increasing the likelihood that very young children with health or developmental delays are identified and referred to services in a timely manner.

The Arkansas Pilot Safe Babies Court Team stands ready to assist you with implementation of your grant, should you receive one. A comprehensive system serving vulnerable children zero to five must include early education opportunities and the Early Learning Challenge grant will help Arkansas continue to develop our system.

Sincerely,

Darneshia Bell

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